Brink of Reality

30 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW AND DO BEFORE YOU'RE 30

Brink of Reality

Copyright 2016 by Muiwa Sowunmi

muiwa@platinummediacompany.org | 0 803 323 6648

Published by

Platinum Media Company

44 Shipeolu Street,

Palm Grove, Lagos

info@platinummediacompany.org | 0 909 051 7791-5

All right reserved under international copyright law. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the express permission of the author.

ISBN -978-970-50971-2-2

Cover design & layout by Muiwa Sowunmi

Printed in Nigeria

Dedication

This work is dedicated to maker and owner of all: God Almighty. To Him be all the glory. And also to the many people whose lives have taught me the little bit I know about life.

My father and mother- Presiding Elder & Deaconess Showunmi,

my siblings - Toyin, Bayo & Molola;

My pastors - Pastor E.A Adeboye, Pastor Remi Morgan, Pastor Ituah Ighodalo, Prof Dele Balogun, Pastor Peace Akingunsoye

and Rev Sam Adeyemi;

My BFF - Damilola Otegbade, Dare Odubote, Daniel Olutayo,

Tosin Adegoke. My twin sis Busayo Fasesin.

My mentors - Gokay Oludare and Minister Segun Oluwayomi

My lovely wife Deborah and our son

Most Reverend, Apostle Oluwole.

Introduction

Life is a journey, not a destination. There are vital phases and milestones along the way that clearly shapes and defines the rest of the journey. The transition into full adulthood that takes place in the twenties, is one of these vital phases. A lot of us spend our twenties second-guessing ourselves whilst contemplating the future. Some of us are in hurry to get somewhere while others are content to go nowhere. You don't have to have everything figured out by the time you're 30 but to an extent, you should have an idea of where you are going and how you intend to get there. Life is long, chaotic, beautiful, random and dynamic. The only thing that you can truly rely on in this world is change, it's constant. This is precisely why a person's twenties are so confusing. It's a period of metamorphosis, when we shed our youthful naïveté and begin to shape the world around us from what we've learned.

Success in life is ultimately subjective, and it's based on what a person values. There is no single path toward success. Yet, we can all agree that feeling successful, on a personal level, is largely a product of whether or not you feel fulfilled. The path toward success is all about finding the balance between what is practical, what we desire and what God wills for us. Defined broadly, success is about living a fulfilling, personally meaningful life that makes you happy. It is finding early God's reason for creating you and fulfilling it within His timeline. Of course, when you're in your twenties, it's hard to know what that really means. Sometimes, you think you know, only to have Life slap you back down with a humbling reality check. What can you do in your twenties to set a foundation for a life well-lived? The specific details will be different for everyone, but in the chapters ahead, I sought to reel out 30 practical nuggets to guide young adults towards setting the right foundation for a successful and purposeful life. I'm aware we are in the "tweeting" era, so reading this book would be like going through your timeline.

Enjoy!

01 Perspective is a beautiful thing

Typically, when we're worried or upset, it's because we've lost perspective. Everything that is happening in our lives seems so big, so important, so do or die, but in the grand picture, this single hiccup often means next to nothing. The fight we're having, the job we didn't get, the real or imagined

slight, the unexpected need to shift course, the thing we wanted, but didn't get. Most of it won't matter 20, 30, 40 years from now. It's hard to see long term when all you know is short term, but unless it's life-threatening, let it go, and move on.

02 Pain is different from suffering

Often, we confuse pain for suffering. Pain lets us know that something is wrong. It is an indicator that you need to change what you're doing. But suffering is a choice—one that we all choose from time to time—and we can choose to stop suffering, to learn a lesson from the pain and move on with our lives. In life, there are 2 kinds of pain. The pain of growth and the pain of regret. We all go through either of these. When you don't want to go through the pain of studying for an exam, for instance, you have automatically chosen the pain of regret that comes with failure.

03 The past is not equal to the future

My words are my words and I can't take them back. You can't change the past, so it's important to focus on the present, because it will soon be history. If the past equaled the future, then your windshield would be of no use to you; you would simply drive your car with your eyes glued to the rearview mirror. A day ahead is way more important than ten years behind. Where you were born, the schools you attended, the friends you had/have, the color of your travel passport shouldn't define your future. Possibilities for you are limitless. Take note!

04 You can't please everyone

"I don't know the secret to success, but the secret to failure is trying to please everyone" – Bill Cosby. Yes it's human nature to want to belong, to

be loved, respected and valued, but not at the expense of your integrity and happiness. You don't need everyone to agree with you or even like you. Other people cannot give you the validation you seek. That as to come from inside. Speak up, stick to your guns, assert yourself when you need to, command respect, stay true to your values.

05 Travel

You don't have family obligations and are carefree. Use this time to meet different people, live with them, and understand their thoughts and culture; go backpacking and learn how to survive independently in a new place. Travel is a great provider of knowledge. We learn through struggling. Few years back, I was posted to serve in Zamfara State, northern Nigeria. Among other things, I had to used donkeys and camels as my main transport means. Though it was fun but that experience made me appreciate Lagos more.

06 Distance Yourself from Drama

You really don't need problematic, energy-sucking people in your life. Learn to tell the difference between people who value you for who you are as you are versus those who just want a piece of you. Avoid toxic and clingy people. Avoid time wasters, especially on your social media space.

07 Resolve your childhood issues

Some people had constructive, loving upbringing. Others have awful, empty, traumatizing childhood. Many more have middle-of-the-road experiences. Form a realistic understanding of your own upbringing, accounting for the fact that your parents were, after all, mere flawed humans. If you have unresolved childhood issues, parental or not, face

them head on. Feel all the feelings, forgive if applicable, and then let it go. Don't wait until your 30s or 40s to resolve your issues. A lot of people have tried, only to find themselves miserable and confused as older adults.

08 Embrace failure, mistakes, and self-love.

Regret is pointless and fully optional. Instead of regretting your mistakes, recognize that most are extremely valuable if you come to understand them. Life is not about making as few errors as possible; it's about learning from as many of them as possible. Got burnt by back-stabbing 'friends'? Pocket the lesson and employ higher standards next time. Review the nefarious incident, forgive yourself, and make sure it doesn't happen again.

09 Learn time and money prudence

From both a personal and business perspective, there are few abilities as useful as time and money management. If you can master the delicate art form of planning ahead, budgeting your time and financial resources, and practicing dependability early on, you will save yourself boatloads of stress over the course of your life. You'll become a better employee or employer, parent, friend, and lover. Don’t oversleep. Don’t buy what you want but don't need. Social media chatting is good, candy crush is cool but know when to turn off your phone and live in the real world. Your time is ticking. Before you know it, your kids are having their own kids.

10 Acknowledge your privileges

In this world, equality is an ideal, not an everyday reality. Some people are more privileged than others. Nearly everyone has benefited from some amount of privilege; there's always someone worse off. The idea is not to feel guilty for your privileges, but to account for them and, when possible, compensate for them. That can be as simple as giving a person a break when they're down and out.

Recognizing the ways in which you have been enriched by happenstance and society will greatly improve your personal maturity and social skills. You will develop a more realistic and compassionate perspective that will pay back lifelong dividends in your ability to successfully and ethically engage with other people.

11 Don't confuse pleasure with happiness

Pleasure comes from the quick-fixes that give joy; like shopping, alcohol, sex, listening to great music, seeing great beauty. Happiness or rather, joy, comes from self-actualization, purpose and meaning. Pleasure is important to a happy life, but pleasure alone is not sufficient. Do what makes you happy. Get a life and live it to the fullest! Let pleasure come after happiness, not the other way around. This is what I mean- don’t hangout all day with your friends and forget to work your dreams. Remember, the sleep of a working man is sweet. So will your hangout be after your targets have been met.

12 Develop balance

There is a tendency to burn the midnight oil in your twenties. Your youth is the best time to learn the importance of moderation and sustainably. In the long run, you will find more success by practicing a balanced lifestyle. If you find yourself drunk or high a majority of your waking hours, give sober socializing a try. If you tend to bury yourself in work and avoid socializing, strike out and let your hair down every once in a while. Whatever you do too much of, find a way to balance it out.

13 Surround yourself with the type of people you'd want to be.

There's a saying that you're the average of your 5 closest friends. While this may not be a scientific fact, it's a useful thought exercise. If you constantly spend time with negative people, you'll become negative as well. If you spend time around people with no ambition, you'll find your own dreams slipping away as well. On the other hand, surrounding yourself with awesome people who want the same things you want in life will set you up for success.

14 Become friends with your parents

Most of us grow up feeling both terrified and in awe of our parents. Parents, for those of us lucky enough to have them, are a person's first model of adulthood. Indeed, children often view their parents as superheroes, only to grow up and find they are just as flawed as everyone else. This does not mean that they don't still have a great deal to teach us, however. We spend much of our teens rejecting and ignoring our parents. It's a natural part of young adulthood. Believe it or not, even in your twenties, your parents still know more than you. Learn from their mistakes and value your time with them. Remember that they won't be here forever.

15 Spend more on experiences than stuffs

Stop spending your money on just material items. None of these things will last, while experiences are eternal. Your mind is a treasure chest of stories and memories. Spend your money on things that will enrich your life, not items that provide you with a fleeting sense of satisfaction. You don't want to end up old and broke with a closet full of moldy clothing and busted shoes. Life is about so much more than money, which comes and goes as it is. If you can understand this lesson by the end of your twenties, you're already wise beyond your years. Don't sweat over the small stuff, just enjoy the ride.

16 Don't Wait For Passion to Find You

What it comes down to is that you need to actually dig your hands into life and try out different hobbies and small-time interests until something grabs you and holds your attention. Then, once you discover something you are really interested in, you can stop and focus your attention on it, exploring it further. Doesn't this makes more sense than just waiting for inspiration to strike?

17 Invest in Self-Knowledge

Your 20s is the best time to start understanding yourself. You should know what upsets you and what makes you happy. Realize what motivates you. Find the answers to these questions: What is your fear? Who loves you?

What do you want to achieve? Our biggest learning task in life is learning who we are. Start by knowing what your temperaments are. We all exhibit predominantly 2 of the four basic temperaments- Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholy and Phlegmatic. Know yourself, what works for you and what doesn't. There are jobs you can't do. There are people you can't date. There are places you can't live. There are things you shouldn't even attempt. Simply because your temperamental makeup doesn't accommodate them.

18 Tame Your Tech

Twenty "somethings" are notorious for being tied to their smartphones 24/7. Use tech for all it's worth, sure, but also learn to set reasonable limits to your usage so you can use that time for other things. Everywhere—on a bus, in a meeting, in a restaurant, with friends, and so on--your eyes are always down, staring at the smartphone. Maybe someone has liked your photo on Facebook, up-voted your answer. Common on, get some air! Swap TV watching or Internet surfing for practice on something that you enjoy and that's also useful. And if there are a couple of other people in the room you're in, talk to them, don't text someone else.

19 Think of Money as a Result, Not a Goal...

It's natural to want to live comfortably later on, but the best way to attain this goal isn't to focus on money itself. Don't stress about money. It will come. So what should you focus on instead? Finding what you like to do and get good at it. You don't have many responsibilities during your 20s and can take risks. So follow your passion--don't get tempted by short-term gains.

Money shouldn't be your primary motivator, but you should still focus on sensible financial planning, especially setting away a rainy-day funds to cushion you when you hit inevitable bumps in the road. Start saving. Set

aside 6 to 12 months of living expenses. You don't want to panic or change your lifestyle if something bad happens like injury, sickness, or job loss.

20 Don't take anything for granted

We often don't appreciate what we have until it's gone: that includes health, family and friends, job. When you're young, it seems that your parents will always be there, but they won't. You think you have plenty of time to get back in touch with your old friends or spend time with new ones, but you don't. You have the money to spend, or you think you'll have it next month, but you might not. Nothing in your life is guaranteed to be there tomorrow, including those you love.

21 Pace yourself

Often when we're young, just beginning our adult journey we feel as though we have to do everything at once. We need to decide everything, plan out our lives, experience everything, get to the top, find true love, figure out our purpose and do it all at the same time.

Slow down—don't rush into things. Let your life unfold. Wait a bit to see where it takes you, and take time to weigh your options. Enjoy every bite of food, let the other person finish their side of the conversation. Taking action is critical. Working towards your goals and making plans for the future is commendable and often very useful, but rushing full-speed ahead towards anything is a one-way ticket to burnout and a good way to miss your life as it passes you by.

22 Love is more than a feeling; it's a choice

That burst of initial exhilaration, pulse quickening love and passion does not last long. But that doesn't mean long-lasting love is not possible. Love is not just a feeling; it's a choice that you make every day. We have to choose to let annoyances pass, to forgive, to be kind, to respect, to support, to be faithful.

Relationships take work. Sometimes it's easy and sometimes it's incredibly hard, but it is up to us to choose how we want to act, think and speak in a relationship.

23 Prayer is not the answer to everything

I know that statement will spark fire in some ‘spiritual’ quarters. But it’s just the truth. Some prayers are wishful statements. Like someone rightly said, if wish were horses, even beggars will ride. Even in Freetown, nothing is free. If you want it bad, you have to work for it, not just pray for it. There are things God has placed within our power to do. Do it! It is those things that are behind our power that we need the help of God for. If you have an exam, read. If you have an interview, research. If you have a project, be diligent with it. Stop using prayer as a shortcut. It won’t work.

24 Managing stress, creating calmness

We all experience stress in life, whether this is in the short term from one-off projects, or long-term stress from a high-pressure career. Not only can this be profoundly unpleasant, it can seriously affect our health. I know of young people with high blood pressure and stress related diseases. However, it is possible to manage stress. We experience stress when we feel threatened, and when we believe that we don't have the resources to deal with a situation. To control your stress, conduct an analysis to know your priorities. Learn time management, so that you can handle your priorities

effectively. Let go of negative thinking habits. Also, create defenses against stressful situations that you cannot control.

25 Develop emotional intelligence

We probably all know people, either at work or in our personal lives, who are really good listeners. No matter what kind of situation we're in, they always seem to know just what to say – and how to say it – so that we're not offended or upset. They're caring and considerate, and even if they don't find a solution to our problem, we usually leave feeling more hopeful and optimistic.

People like this have a high degree of emotional intelligence, or EI. They know themselves very well, and they're also able to sense the emotional needs of others. EI is an awareness of your actions and feelings – and how they affect those around you. It also means that you value others, listen to their wants and needs, and are able to empathize or identify with them on many different levels.

26 Quality decision making

We make decisions every single day. Some are simple, others are more complex. Some are routine that you make them without giving much thought. But difficult or challenging decisions demand more consideration. Decisions like career choice, choice of life partner, where to live and so on. Our first inclination as young people is to follow the footsteps of a friend or someone close. Mind you, their lives path is different from yours. Their choices might not work for you like it did for them. So in making a quality decision, be diligent to investigate the situation in detail, generate good alternatives, explore your options, Select the best solution, evaluate your plan, communicate your decision if necessary, and then take action.

27 Do what scares you

Nike says - "Just Do It". It is when you go too far that you get to know how far you can go. The real limitation in life is in the mind. Take that step! Apply for that job! As that lady out! Invent that dream! You have you life ahead of you, you're too young to be scared. What you are scared of, is scared of you.

A survey was conducted in the US a while back with a bunch of senior citizens in their late 70s. The question was: what are your regrets in life. The aggregate answer was that they regret daring less. When will you need the help of God if all you do is what you can do?

28 Cook

Earlier on in life, it was the responsibility of your parent's to see to the meals. But as late teens and early twenties set in, they don't even ask if you have eaten. Though it's funny, but it is the reality, many young ladies can't cook a proper meal. I believe this is because whilst alone in school, they depended more on restaurants.

I'm guilty of same. I wish I could go back and really learn to cook. Well, I'm good with noodles and egg. Lol. It doesn't matter if you're male or female, it will save you a whole lot to cook than to eat out.

29 Drive

The best way to create your future is to predict it. Definitely sometime soon, you will have a car (that's if you don't have one already). Why not go ahead and learn how to drive? Don't wait till the opportunity shows up before you start learning. If you are fast, in a couple of days you are driving. Like Abraham Lincoln said, success happens when preparation meets opportunity. I had the rare privilege to drive one of my mentors around on a day his driver wasn't available. I still vividly remember that deep and helpful things he shared with me simply because we spent a lot of time together.

30 Everybody worships something

In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshiping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. Don't get it twisted. Worship is not those slow songs we sing before service starts. Worship is a fusion of two words - worth and ship. Worship is giving worth or meaning to something. Different things in our lives take different levels of importance. But what is it that takes the central place, with whom all others take their meaning from? For a lot of folks, it is money. Without it, they feel empty &

unfulfilled. Get it now and get it straight, If God is not centre of your life, ultimate fulfillment becomes a mirage.